

Robbins sermon - Biblical basis for Unity

1 Cor. 1:10

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought. My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul", another, "I follow Apollos", another, "I follow Cephas", still another, "I follow Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, so no one can say that you were baptized in my name.

Biblical authority

- United Methodists hold that Scripture is paramount.
- John Wesley said "I am a man of one book".
- The divide is not over scriptural authority, but biblical interpretation
 - Interpretation has to do with application to everyday life

Paul

- Upset with the church of Corinth because people were not united with Christ as head
- He instructed that the message of Jesus Christ supersedes all else
- Many Old Testament examples of social rules we do not hold with today:
 - Leviticus 11:3-4 eat animals with divided hoof (no pig, rabbit)
 - Leviticus 11:9-10 eat water creatures with fins and scales, all other is unclean
 - Leviticus 12: 1-5 women are unclean and barred from sanctuary while menstruating and after giving birth
 - Leviticus 19:19 do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material
 - Deuteronomy 21:18 if someone has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother.....stone him to death
 - Leviticus 19:28 do not put tattoo marks on your body
- New Testament examples as well:
 - 1 Cor. 14:34 women should remain silent in churches
 - 1 Tim. 2:9 women should dress modestly.....not adorning themselves with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes
 - 1 Peter 2:18 Slaves, accept the authority of your masters with all deference, not only those who are kind and gentle but also those who are harsh.

Jesus Christ

- Harsh and vindictive rules/laws/behaviors are the reason God sent Jesus whose message is of love and grace.
- Jesus took the Old Testament text and said, not any more:
 - Mt. 5:38-39 You have *heard it said*, "eye for eye, and tooth for tooth." *But I tell you*, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also.
 - Mk. 7:18-23 Nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them. What comes out of a person is what defiles them.(abolishes food laws)

- Acts 10:44-48 Holy Spirit comes upon Gentiles that had not been circumcised. And Peter said, “Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.”
 - To say circumcision no longer mattered was a seismic shift
 - Saying God’s word can’t ever be changed isn’t historically accurate and isn’t accurate according to the final word of Jesus Christ
- There is an argument that United Methodists are no longer traditional
 - But slavery was tradition
 - Subjugating women was tradition
- We need to grow up as a church - our arguments are about *interpretation* - not authority

Human Sexuality

- Traditionalists quote Leviticus and Paul’s statement in Romans - but he is not the final word, and he says so in 1 Cor
- Progressives ask “What does Jesus say?” *NOTHING*
 - If it’s that important to us but not to Jesus, we need to step back and think about that
- Traditionalists say progressives have lowered their standards
 - Jesus’ standard is grace - which goes to the lowest of places
 - Our standard is not low enough, let’s lower it as low as we can
 - We are turning people away from Jesus
 - We are held accountable for that
 - But who did Jesus reject and say is unworthy? No one.
 - We don’t have the right to make that judgment
 - We are *all* messed up, broken, in need of a savior
 - What right do we have to say “scripture says, so you can’t”?
 - It’s not our place to judge
- Traditionalists believe a marriage is between one man and one woman. But biblical marriage is not that clear. Most biblical figures have hundreds of wives. What is marriage anyway? Heterosexual marriage is in trouble. We can’t blame that on the gay community. If sanctity of marriage is messed up, that’s our fault, not the gay population.
- Jesus Christ says:
 - Mt. 11:28 Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.....
 - Mt. 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.....
 - Jesus Christ is the final voice
 - Be the church of Jesus Christ